



THE NATIONAL PREACHER, And Village Pulpit.

Vol. III.—New Series.]

JANUARY, 1861.

[No. 1.—Whole No. 833.]

SERMON I.

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THE MINISTRIES OF TIME.

"I the Lord will hasten it in his time."—ISAIAH 60: 22.

GOD is Sovereign and Omnipotent, but he waits the ministration of Time. He could force seasons and laws, but it is his way rather to work through them and by them. He has ordained them as servitors of his will. His purposes on the earth, in the conduct of human affairs, had, in respect to their accomplishment, a germination, a process, and a harvest-hour of consummation:

Time is the prime-minister of Providence, and brings to pass in due order, at their full periods, and at the appointed juncture, the patient counsels of the Most High. There is no hurrying and no sickness of deferred hope on that eternal and tranquil mind. "One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." It lends a new dignity and a sterner and loftier majesty to Time, when we consider it thus, not impersonally, as

the passing away of our days—the swift, mute lapse of the stream of life sliding down the vale—but as a strong executive angel, a sceptered and conscious force that has it in charge to reveal and fulfill the hidden plan of God.

Man is strong and works great changes upon the earth and his fellow-man. Art is strong and produces its rapid marvels. The forces serving the human will are nimble and muscular. Heat and frost lift up monuments of their might and magic. The fires of earth's center, the winds that sweep over her surface, the seas that thunder along her shores, these have their power and their trophies. But Time is the great magician. All these latter forces are sinews of its own arm. The changes, the revolutions, the histories of this world are only chronicles of the vice-regency of Time.

It is fitting, as the swift shuttle glances past again, drawing another thread into the woven fabric of God's scheme for earth and man, bringing out yet more clearly the parts in the pattern for the whole, that we pause to consider

This ministry of time in accomplishing the Divine pleasure.

If the whole scope of the supreme administration may not be known thus, we may gather at least some of the principles and particulars that unite at last to perfect that consummate whole. We shall see that Time is among men, the revealer, the attester, the vindicator, the rectifier, the fulfiller.

Time tests the principles of human conduct. I speak here of avowed principles, consciously, perhaps boldly proceeded upon, set in contrast or antagonism with one another. There is a difference among men, both in theory and in practice, in respect to these principles. The diversity and the divergence illustrate themselves in innumerable ways. Look in upon two scenes of family training. In one of them the idea is, with the controlling head, that the true end of domestic nurture is social success. Special stress then will be laid upon the accomplishments, whose chief grace is external. The manner is a matter of first concern. The gloss of an outward polish is of great price. The step must be put under tuition. Motion must be artistic—graduated to rule and canon. Exits and entrances must be fashioned after a model. The introduction into society is a grand and solemn crisis. Acquaintances must be made. The young lives must be launched upon the social world. What if they should be neglected, thrown out of the current, stranded high and dry upon the bank—the stream of their generation flowing merrily by, and leaving them, as it were, only to serve as landmarks for the progress of the gay, iris-tinted bubbles that float, with music and laughter, ever on amid greenness and bloom? This must not be. A social triumph must in some way be achieved. And all the care and painstaking converge to this issue. In the other the commanding object is the

formation of a right character. The interior life of gentle manners must be gentle thoughts. The only external polish that will never grow coarse is the outshining of inward purity and kindness. The law of love is the sufficient code of politeness and etiquette. The best social furnishing is the wealth of the soul's virtuous intelligence, an appreciation of what is true and beautiful in nature, in mind and morals, the utterance of generous sensibilities and of a self-respect that prefers its own calm approval to admiration and flattery, and sets the price of its modesty too high to offer itself as a prize for social bidding. You shall hear now the first of these two systems remonstrating with the other—predicting social isolation, social failure, urging the demonstrative and forcing culture, adopting it for the sons and daughters under its guardianship, and resting cheerfully and complacently in its superior discernment and wisdom. This subject carries me back in thought to my own early rural home. I look in again upon the families that were so ambitious of social conquests. I see the youths and maidens there planning festive entertainments, and delighting in gay assemblies. The fashions and the gayeties were, to be sure, somewhat on a rural scale; but it was our world, and a miniature in all essential features of the most brilliant metropolitan life. And, to be sure, the sober puritanical portion of the rising generation that were left quite outside this conventional society—their faces are not seen, nor their hands sought in the ball-room. The winter evening ride, the rural party, and generally all scenes of youthful merry-making in which the set came together, were made up without their presence. Here there were smiles and laughs and romps and dances and cards and all the staple of vain and thoughtless fellowship and enjoyment, from which our graver style of young life was self-exiled. And so the issue was made, and the trial of the two systems entered upon. And in the one circle, quick friendships were formed—a score of acquaintances were added to one's list in a single evening. No danger of being lost sight of socially—dropt out of social recognition: here the doors stood wide open to social settlements and domestic alliances. And sometimes it was felt, I know, on the other side, that all such doors were shut against them. They seemed isolated from those of their own age; their seclusion was uninvaded, they could improve their minds, cultivate their taste, study the secrets of happy, dignified, and well-ordered homes, quite to themselves. Who would know ever whether they were prizes or blanks? The drawing would be all in the other circle, and the more worldly policy looked like a success. There all was bright and glittering. Here lay a shadow. There, there was mating and marrying and giving in marriage. Here all relations were undisturbed. Taking life as it is, this more select discipline promised to be barren of results. But principles are everlasting verities; they change not;

they are of slow development often; their seed lies cold and motionless long; their harvest comes late, but it comes. Such issues are not to be settled in a day. Their trial takes in, in its progress, more elements than are at first seen to be included. The earlier appearances are not reliable exponents of the final consummation. Across the breadth of years I look and read the story truer. The paths of life from those two circles, the streams from those separate fountains, are visible before me. The gay, brilliant type quickly darkened and degenerated. That was its best. It never rose higher. There were early excesses—there were early and dishonored graves—there were floating wrecks of vice and dissipation—there were sad, sad tales of shame and anguish—there were miserable disappointments. Those that were specially decked and tutored for proudest triumphs, somehow always missed their goal. What they won was trash, or worse, and for the most part they drew utter blanks. It all came to naught. The glittering bubble burst, and there was nothing in the hand but the stain of defiling moisture.

And on the other side, once more, there was always a wealth of personal resources; there was a growing but unconscious refinement; there was fostered a selecter and more discriminating taste; solid and abiding qualities grew with the passing youthful season, and when more difficult and fastidious minds came searching for fresh, unsoiled natures, and an outfit for wider and higher spheres, they found the golden fruit hidden beneath the overshadowing leaves, and gathered it with pride and joy. I have lingered too long upon this, but it is a most instructive page. And the record is repeated at ten thousand social centers, only it can not be written at once, or read at a glance. Like Chinese writings, the lines stretch down the lengthening scroll of Time. Time is the slow scribe, the sure expounder.

One man argues that: "Take the world as it goes, and you must practice upon it to gain your ends. You must manage a little—you must move subtly and dexterously toward your aims—you must not show your hand—you need not tell the whole story out—you must ask more than you expect to get—you must put the best face on a thing it can be made to wear—you may well enough leave sharp eyes and keen wits to explore and interpret your silence. The universal system is such that if we do not adopt this policy, we shall be left hopelessly behind." Another man plants his foot immovably upon the conviction that honesty is the best policy. He must be frank, transparent, true. More or less, his gains must bring within his doors no reproaches. Poverty is a pleasanter household companion than remorse—strict right with a crust, rather than wrong with princely dainties. And the two procedures start together on the track. The first success is almost always on the side of cunning. Slow mov-

ing, downright honesty is speedily distanced. One holds a court, the other sits in solitude. The proverb hardly expresses a truth for "the life that now is." Ah! wait a little. Hear the witness of Time. Intrigue and practicing can not always escape the light—and the light they can not bear. Men once bitten grow shy of traps. No body loves to be practiced upon. Wily natures always come at last to be distrusted. These little business and social treacheries invariably, in the long run, lose the operators their richest capital—confidence. And the tides ebb away; and now it is honesty's turn. It comes late, but it is final. There is nothing after it. Here is perfect trust—unsuspecting security. Here we find bottom, and stand firm. The proverb was altogether right. Principles have had their development, and each after its kind borne their fruit. Time has ripened and gathered it—apples of Sodom for the one, apples of gold, nay, golden-globed sweetness from the tree of life for the other.

This is the demonstration of principle that can not be set aside—the demonstration of Time.

Again, Time is the test of friendships. Where is the love that never grows cold, that outlives youth and bloom, that was founded on deeper and more vital attractions than those that pass away with life's roseate morning? Where are the hands that used to clasp ours? Have they warm and welcoming palms for us still? Where are the lips that smiled upon us once? Do they keep smiles or sternness for us now? We used to listen to such earnest and tender expressions of interest in our fortunes, delight in our society, regard for our persons, and appreciation of our characteristics. Are all those utterances silent now? How much of youthful and ardent friendship has survived those summer days? How many of our later associations have kept their first gushing promises in truth and faithfulness?

And yet we must not judge harshly. If there is any lesson which Time letters most legibly on all the pages of our story, it is, that our hard, reproachful judgments, our morbid protests that all is false, deceitful, and hollow, that truth and honor have forsaken the earth, that none can be trusted, that no heart is sincere, that real kindness and genuine good-will are not to be found among men, are extravagances that would be ridiculous if they were not so false and injurious. We have been deceived and betrayed, but we must not generalize from that instance. We have broken through the ice here and there, but there may be yet broad fields of it as firm as a marble floor. The very hearts that we pronounce alienated and estranged, may rather have become wearied than chilled. Dislocated from one side, the broken fibers of social affections must cling somewhere. Thrown upon other fellowships, the tendrils have caught and twined about fresh objects. Once they were all free to turn and choose as they listed, but they have

been pressed long since into new alliances, and have responded to the new appeals as once they responded to ours. But in this very fact they show that their nature is unchanged. To human love, if not to our personal memory, they still are true; yes, and bring back the old relations, and we, it may be, should not find them wanting. This is what Time teaches.

And then, again, Time tries his tests upon character. Sorrowfully, often, we are made to watch this process. All seems fair outwardly. We have unbounded confidence. We surrender our gravest trusts. We rest upon this tried and approved integrity. It becomes a standard-bearer in the most salient advances of Christianity. It wins a good report. It stands a pillar, straight, strong, and upright. Lay your weight there, build thereon; and we build, and feel secure for solid years. And, one day, there is a crash. It was only the shell of a pillar; either within it was all rottenness and hollowness, or a sudden and violent wrench twisted it out of place, and down it came, fallen and broken. It is a mournful lesson Time has read us. Whom shall we trust? What shall we build with? Character that has stood seemingly all severer tests, passed unsullied amid youthful passions and summer temptations, met the hour and call of solemn duties, took on the sober livery of its autumn staidness and ripeness—can not this be confided in? Are life-long victories over manifold forces of evil no security? Ah! one test remains. It is a silent, patient, long-waiting detective. At last it gives in its report, and we are stricken dumb with surprise and grief. Hastily, perhaps, we say: "All is over; this is the end; there is nothing left there; here shuts down the gate of life and hope." And Time may yet correct this too hasty conclusion, and read us an unpublished story that would draw deep upon our tenderest sympathies, and forbid us to pass capital sentence upon our brother on one indictment only, when we are impeachable in many points, and lead up out of the valley of humiliation a chastened penitent, a restored wanderer, whose lore in divine grace and infinite compassion shall surpass all that we have known, whose fitness for rare and special service shall be tempered in this fiery furnace, and whose evening of life shall yet show a serene and glowing west. Hast thou, O Time! and thou, O wondrous grace of God! such revelations in store? We will pause, and hope, and pray, till the future draw back its veil.

Is there a ghost in every house, a phantom dogging every man's footsteps, a secret in every bosom? Here and there, there is a seemingly calm and self-possessed spirit, that faces tranquilly the light of day and the gaze of all-searching eyes, as though the waters flowed transparent with crystal clearness over a pebbly bed, in which the while there is yet beneath this surface-sparkling, a deep, dark pool, and at the bottom a grim, slimy monster that

never comes to the light. There lurks that leviathan for unsuspected years. No ripple above, no commotion on the surface, gives signs of the horrid life in the dark depths. The man walks amid his fellow-men as though with a consciousness never disturbed. No infirmity of nerve ever sets him to trembling. No pause in his unsleeping vigilance betrays him into fatal admissions. In his utter solitude he sometimes faces this untold story. But no lips can ever tell it. It lies within the compass of no single knowledge. It is broken into fragments, like a shattered ring, or a fatal bond torn apart and distributed into remote and alien hands. Can those fragments ever be gathered, those parts ever be reunited? Alone and by itself, each means nothing, reveals nothing. What simultaneous impulse shall move these "disjecta membra" to come together? The thing can never be; and the keeper of the shameful secret passes on reassured. Then Time waves his wand. The hand that held one fragment molders in dust, and the eyes of executors scan curiously the torn and yet ominous leaf. From opposite meridians, as though led on by fate, come up, at the only juncture that could serve the issue, the remaining witnesses. The mutilated memorial is again a whole, but it is written in cipher, and the dream of security lingers yet. And the magic wand is lifted once more, and the hidden key drops from its hiding-place, and all is legible and patent. Time has become the minister of justice. And the last words of every dying year wake in guilty breasts this dreary echo: "There is nothing covered that shall not be revealed, and hid, that shall not be known."

And yet there are those to whom this word is not dreary, but animating; not a menace, but a long-sustaining promise. They have been under a cloud. Their character has been unrighteously aspersed. Men have believed evil of them. They have been the victims of mistakes, or of circumstances, or of malignant conspiracy. The baleful torches of calumny have flared upon them and blackened them all over. Their simple assertion of innocence has been taken as brazen-fronted hardihood. Many a hand has been withdrawn from them; many a face has turned away. Friends once trustful and beloved have passed by on the other side. So they have walked on in the cold shadows of the long night, waiting for the dawn; and the slow hours rolled away. They had no hope but in God, and God sent to them this championship of Time. And one day the solution of the mystery was suddenly uncovered, and men saw how they had been deluded, and how falsely they had believed. And this patient innocence shone forth like a rising sun, the brighter for its obscurity, all the more revered that it had suffered long in uncomplaining silence. And it is seen that character is not committed to human keeping. No enemy can take it from us. We need not fear, in our innocence, the face of mortal, the malice of infernal. We can calmly

defy all machinations; and when girt about with hissing serpents, who boast that they have us in their own den and power, we can stand in the heroism of this single truth: "The Lord is on my side, I will not fear: what can man do unto me?"

Again, the real struggle of a man's life, the crisis of his moral history, Time often holds in reserve. It comes not in his sheltered boyhood, over which bend only bright and genial skies. His youth glides past him, a peaceful stream flowing on through gentle meadows. Manhood takes him by the hand, and there has been as yet no faltering in his step. He seems to have conquered in the fields of life, to have mastered his passions without a conflict. And, perhaps, gray mingles with the native hue of his hair, the seal of his confirmation in settled integrity. He knows not, and no man knows, the strength of his propensities. The hour of trial has never fairly fronted him. What a mutinous crew slumber under the hatches there he suspects not! What combustibles are gathered beneath the fair fabric of his unsullied name! What a train might be fired, what a fight he might be called to maintain, with upleaping and furious foes and flames, he never for a moment dreams! It may happen to him to know better by and by. The ripe hour hurries on. It is all the more perilous that he has never faced real and mortal danger. He has no lore of warning experience. The train is fired, and the tumult begins. Let him gird himself like a man. The combat rages. What a fearful strife! Forward and backward the tide ebbs and flows. No such strain as this has ever tested the might of his arm. He has called himself a soldier, but he has never had a field-day till now. What if it should go against him. He pants, and bleeds, and falters. Oh! woe the day, if he have not a Divine Helper, or if he forget to look up for heavenly succor! Let no man speak harshly of the fallen; let no man plume himself upon his own immaculateness. Our day may come. Low behind the bending west the distant cloud may even now be rising. Be meek, charitable, watchful, and prayerful.

God even commits his own vindication to Time. He delays, both to visit for daring wrong, and to reward patient faith. His threatenings and his promises seem laid aside, forgotten. The impious cry derisively, "Where is the promise of his coming?" and the believer: "Lord, how long?" But there is no demonstration from the silent heavens. That sovereign hand begins its work afar off. It rolls up not a single event, but an ordered and massive system. The good die while yet the consummation hoped for lingers. The vile triumph, and their seed seems established in the earth. Then on the vast, dim dial, the index points to the appointed hour, and vengeance and deliverance do their work; and, amid blasphemy confounded and righteousness exultant, sounds the blessed voice: "I the Lord will hasten it in his time."

In the individual life the grandest spiritual truths are learned

late. Here, as in all learning, there is an alphabet first, and more wondrous revelations afterward. For these deeper and more radiant mysteries there must be often a peculiar preparation. The soul must have a past to look back to, to build upon. The path up the snowy Alps is at first along rugged and earthy ravines; by and by it emerges, and the dazzling peak shoots heavenward. The time of need, the hour of trial, the crisis of sharp experience, must bring the moment of revelation. We must suffer our converts to be babes; we must expect for ourselves more glowing and rapt discoveries of God's grace and loving-kindness than our poor attainments in the past have ever mastered.

But these ministries of Time touch heart-nerves in passing. They play sorely on tender chords. The music is solemn, wailing, and dirge-like. There are weeping kindreds here, who dreamed not a year ago, in their glad security, what Time had in store for them; that he should lead their best-beloved away from their circle; that he was weaving ever, while they smiled and slept, a winding-sheet for tender, fair, and manly forms; that, in the silence and in the darkness, he was digging a grave, and lettering some sweet household name in marble; that soon he should shroud their joyousness in the darkness of the tomb, their festive garments in the sable of mourning. But this he had in keeping for them. He has lent strength and grace to many a life; he has piled up bounties at every door; he has filled our garners with his loaded wains; but, alas! he has stolen from hearth-stone and fireside what he can never replace.

And yet Time has a ministry of consolation too. He heals where he wounds. It is of God that his touch has such a balm in it. He wipes away tears; he unknits the furrowed brow; he brings back the smile to the quivering lips; he leads the captive forth into the sunshine; he gathers upon the bereaved the tender and soothing spell of memory; he plants flowers in the path where bleeding feet have walked, pierced by the thorns.

O Time! what dost thou yet keep back from us? What commissions hast thou to execute upon us in these fresh opening days of the new-born year? Whither along this track that glides always into the shadow of to-morrow dost thou lead our feet? What of joy or of sorrow, of conflict or of suffering, art thou marshaling even now? Vain guess! No voice answers. Into the mist opens no vista of light. But this we know, Time is a creature of God. It waits upon that sovereign will. It comes to us, a guide sent from heaven, to conduct us onward into the good-pleasure of One, whom in life and in death we can trust with our mortal and immortal hopes.

O Time! roll on the year; bring up the forces of the hidden future. With one hand clasping the Divine hand, and a mutual good cheer, which we make a prayer to-day, we go forward in faith and hope.

SERMON II.

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THE RETRIBUTIVE POWER OF MEMORY.

"BUT Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivest thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented."—LUKE 16: 25.

WHEN the life that now is shall be past, and that which is to come shall be present, it will be the office of memory to establish and perpetuate the connection of knowledge between these two periods of our conscious being. Without such a connection, the religion of the Bible, considered as expounding the relations between time and eternity, would seem to be a failure. The theory of probation here, followed by judgment and retribution hereafter, in order to be consciously realized in the future life, supposes that we shall be able in that life to return our thoughts to the scene through which we are now passing, reproducing it in the eye of the mind. This we must do, or we could not identify ourselves as the same beings, in the two states; nor could we see the relation between what we *are* in the one life, and what we have *done* in the other. Losing sight of this life, we should have no means of interpreting that; we should be unable either to give or receive an account of the deeds done in the body; and hence a system of rewards and punishments in any sense that we could appreciate, would be an impossibility. That memory will therefore exist as a faculty, and its action as a function of the future life, is as certain as the truth of the Bible. This idea is clearly stamped upon the words of the text. The rich man who lifted up his eyes in the world of woe, was told to recur in thought to the facts of his former lifetime. True, his body had died; but his memory was still living and active, fully able to go back to the world he had left, and recall its scenes.

Those, moreover, who believe in the immortality of the soul, whether on the ground of reason, or revelation, or both, must also believe in the immortality of its faculties, especially those that have little or no dependence upon the body, and which can therefore work as well without the body as with it, and perhaps

much better. Reason, memory, and conscience belong to this class of mental powers. We see not in what way death can wield any agency, either to destroy these powers or impair their activity.

Assuming, then, the immortality of the soul, also that of memory in the state of endless activity, and also that our future condition, in the relation of a sequel to a preceding cause is dependent upon our moral conduct in this life, we naturally think of memory, as one of the great agencies, that for weal or woe will be intimately connected with the history of our future being. How shall we be affected by this return of thought to the scenes of an earthly life? To this solemn and deeply interesting question, I propose in the present sermon to seek an answer, using our present knowledge of memory as the medium of ascending to the sight of things future and eternal.

I. What, then, is Memory? Let us first define the faculty. Every one is aware of the fact, that the knowledge which we have once acquired, the things we have seen and done, the experiences that we have had, though not always present to the mind, are nevertheless so *retained*, that these same things may be, and often are, recalled to our mental notice. Every one is fully conscious of such a fact in his own history. We designate this fact by the term memory. Memory is therefore the mind's power of preserving and knowing its own past history—resuscitative or reproductive in the sense of bringing the items of that history to present view—recognitive in the sense of connecting those items with ourselves. So far as its action can extend, it makes the acquired possessions of the soul imperishable. This is memory here: it is the kind of mental activity to which we apply the term; and if the faculty be immortal, it will be memory hereafter. A change of worlds will not alter the nature of the power. It is the same in both worlds. We are, moreover, so constructed, that we can not discredit the knowledge given by memory. I am as certain of what I distinctly remember, as I can be of any thing. In its sphere the faculty is an absolute authority. Its testimony must be admitted. Such is its present character; and judging from the present, such will be its future character.

From this definition we see at a glance the immense importance of memory in the constitution of man. Without it he would be nothing as a spiritual being, either here or hereafter. The absolute loss of memory would destroy the whole framework of his mental existence, by limiting his intellectual life to the impressions of the passing moment. He would know nothing of the past, and could rise to no view of the future. He could neither love nor hate, hope nor fear. Comparison would be out of the question; reason would be dead, and progress impossible; and, indeed, the whole man would be reduced to a condition

worse than the lowest form of idiocy. There is a vast importance attached to the capacity; its services are of the highest grade; and if this be so here, then, by analogy, we infer that the same will be true hereafter. It will not be less as a power, or less needful, than it was in time. It is now vitally interwoven with our whole temporal destiny; and the presumption of a like importance, a like service, and perhaps much greater, through the ages of our endless being, falls into the ear of reason, not only as a pleasant sound, but as a truth too probable to be questioned, and too significant to be forgotten. Observing what the faculty now does, how it traverses the silent chambers of the past, preserving our knowledge, and diffusing light, and life, health and force through the complicated energies of our mental nature, we are lost in the contemplation of what it will do, when the hindrances of flesh and blood are gone, and the ever-increasing ages of the past shall be the field of its endless action. Immortality expands our ideas of memory to an estimate that is almost infinite.

II. Let me say, as a second item of thought, that memory operates in obedience to established and permanent LAWS. No one can have failed to see, at least in a general sense, that our ideas are in some way so connected together that they are mutually suggestive of each other, and hence proceed in companies or regular trains. The object present to the eye of thought brings up one that is absent, in virtue of some relation between the two; and thus we advance from thought to thought with the utmost celerity, precision, and certainty of movement. Take, for example, a common conversation in which a dozen persons may be sharers: see how their thoughts fly in all directions, moving hither and thither, marking an indefinite number of points, leaping over immense intervals of time, marching in and marching out with a rapidity that entirely escapes their own notice, sometimes apparently without any connection. The remark of one starts a train of ideas in the mind of another, who, in his turn, sets another mind in motion. Thus they go on, it may be for hours, simply thinking and talking, calling up millions upon millions of memories. And now if you had an eye sufficiently detective and comprehensive to explore this whole scene, you would see that, without hesitation, uncertainty, or confusion, every mind in this group has moved from object to object in the most perfect obedience to law. Not a thought has been present, or a word spoken, out of all connection with some other thought or word. Every thing was in its place according to a fixed mental order—not a moment too soon, or a moment too late.

"Lulled in the countless chambers of the brain
Our thoughts are linked by many a hidden chain:
Awake but one, and lo! what myriads rise!
Each stamps its image as the other flies."

Let me illustrate one or two of these hidden chains to which the poet refers. It is a well-ascertained fact of experience, that if two objects resemble each other, either in themselves, or in their effects upon our feelings, one being absent and the other present, the latter has the power to recall the former. Thus, according to this law of similars, you see a portrait, and you instantly think of the person whom it represents. You meet a man whom you never saw before, passing him without saying a word; and that man suggests to you an absent friend, perhaps long since dead, owing to some resemblance, perhaps very slight, between the two persons. Millions of ideas are daily crossing our intellectual heavens under the operation of this law. So also ideas that stand to each other in the relation of contrariety or contrast are mutually suggestive, according to the law of opposites. Vice will hence suggest virtue; and wealth, poverty. Kings and beggars are thus related. The thoughts expressed by the terms high and low, great and small, bond and free, wise and ignorant, are linked together by the relation of contrast. The one being present, the opposite thought will instantly make its appearance. The charms of antithesis and the power of wit depend upon this kind of association. Then, again, things that have been contemplated together in either time or place, are for this reason so connected that they are suggestive of each other; and this general fact is called the law of proximity or nearness. Your mind fastens upon a particular point in time past, or a particular place visited by you in other days; and what a multitude of objects connected with that time or place will at once rush into the field of vision! Having been once thought of together, they remain together in your after-history, being in this form laid up in the folds of memory. Thus the man of three-score years and ten has no sooner fixed his mind upon some item of his childhood, than a whole army of other items passes under his review. He can talk for hours together, reproducing with great vividness the by-gone scenes of early life, separated from them in time, but not in thought. Still further, things that hold to each other the relation of dependence expressed by the terms cause and effect, have the same power of mutual suggestion. If you think of the French revolution, you will naturally dwell upon the causes which led to it, perhaps recalling the men who were its chief agents. The mention of a disease will suggest to you some friend who died with that disease. Thus our thoughts, by a fixed order of nature, move from cause to effect, and effect to cause.

Such, then, are the hidden chains or laws of mental association, by which our thoughts are linked together, and hence have the power of rescuing each other from the grave of oblivion. By them we conduct the process of memory. We do it without labor, yea, by necessity, having no power not to do it. We can

neither change the laws, nor refuse to accept the results of their action. The truth is, we must remember; we must converse with the past.

These laws represent no outward force, no determining necessity existing in the objects of thought. They are strictly subjective, inherent in the mind itself, being the established forms of its action, the divinely appointed methods in which it retains and brings forth its knowledge, and hence living in the mind as a portion of the furniture of intelligence. By a force wholly within itself, by a necessary energy in its own nature, alike inscrutable and irresistible, the mind makes the connection, in virtue of which our thoughts reproduce and follow each other in regular trains. It is so constructed by its great Author, that it must think in this way. And if such be its present constitution, if the laws of memory be inherent in the very nature of man's soul, if our intellectual reproduction and recognition of the past be thus an absolute necessity in the present life, think you that a transfer of the mind to other scenes will be the end of these facts? Exactly the opposite is the probability to be gathered, from what we now know of man. The fundamental principles of spiritual activity must go with the mind wherever it goes; they enter into its very definition as part and parcel of its being; and we hence infer that they will exist hereafter as really as they do here, doubtless very much intensified in their power of action. Reason thus carries her conception of memory into the immortal future. Exploring the man that now is, she forms an idea of the man that will be. Following him across the event of death, and lifting her pinions to the sublime elevation of eternity, she sees the same essential laws of intellectual life acting there that were so active here. In this way we obtain one clew to the future, ascending from the known elements of our present being to those that will enter into our future and endless being. Thus we think of ourselves as intelligent in both worlds, conscious in both, voluntary in both, in both exercising memory according to fixed laws, some of which at least rule our present life. Our mental access to things eternal is gained by that which we know in time. Our primary notions of ourselves as existing hereafter must be gathered from ourselves as existing here. By no other method can we form even the faintest idea of our future state.

III. Having thus defined memory, and briefly explained its laws, I wish to call your attention, in the third place, to the **EXTENT** of its retentive and reproductive power. In the amazing greatness of this power, as we observe it in time, we shall perhaps find the condition of at least conjecturing what it will be in eternity. It was the opinion of Lord Bacon that nothing in one's antecedent history is ever irrecoverably forgotten. Cole-

ridge held the same view. Whether the opinion be true or false, it is not possible to prove the negative of this view, since the argument would imply the memory of the very thing alleged to be forgotten, and would therefore be self-contradictory.

We know, moreover, as a matter of positive experience, that the prominent and leading facts of life past are safely retained in the bosom of memory. They are often brought to our notice. What one spontaneously remembers, is quite sufficient to excite his wonder. If we could take distinct notice of every idea thus brought up in the course of a single day, so as to count the whole, the aggregate would doubtless amount to a great many millions. Every one at sight, without a moment's hesitation, can answer an indefinite number of questions in respect to the events of his own antecedent history. Indeed, all that we know, all that we have acquired by our other faculties, all that we can bring up from the regions of the past, our knowledge of the meaning of words, what we have seen, thought, and done, how we have felt, what has happened to us in the journey of life, in short, the total treasures of our intellectual being, portions of which we are so frequently using, are stored away in the capacious chambers of memory. The available contents of this faculty, those to which we have constant access, and which because they are so common, excite but little attention, evince the marvelous scope of power. They show the breadth, extent, and force of its grasp upon the past. Even the most common man may well be astonished at the vast resources of his own memory.

When, too, we observe that all our knowledges and experiences, all things that we have ever thought, felt, said, or done, are linked together by the laws of mental association; when we consider the number of these laws and the manner in which they may coöperate with each other; when we remember that no item of our past being is isolated or dis severed from other items; when we regard the whole of life's events as a long series of connected particulars from the moment that now is to the one in which we drew our first breath; when we take this view, the mind seems to be a vast sounding-board, ever ringing with the echo of itself, or, to change the figure, a complicated mechanism of keys, any one of which, being touched, may give forth a million of notes, which may again be multiplied into other millions, and so on, till the ear of thought shall have heard all that thought ever held. The laws of memory, alike irresistible and infallible, contain a most wonderful arrangement to transmit the soul along the corridors of the past, even to the remotest period. They are suited to lay open the broad field of its realities, and bring them under present view. One knows not where to fix the boundary of a process conducted and facilitated by such powerful laws.

The many instances of remarkable memory that we gather from history, are an instructive commentary upon the greatness of this power. The man, for example, who, being blindfolded, can play several games of chess at the same time, with as many different antagonists, keeping in his mind's eye the exact position of all the pieces in each of these games, exhibits a concentration and grasp of memory, which though not miraculous, seem perfectly astonishing. Themistocles, we are told, could call by their names the twenty thousand citizens of Athens. It is said of Cyrus, that he could repeat the name of every soldier in his army. Hortensius, one of the orators of Rome, after sitting a whole day at a public sale, could enumerate from memory all the things sold, their prices, and the names of their purchasers. Ben Jonson could repeat all that he had ever written, and whole books that he had simply read. Seneca, the rhetorician, was able to repeat two thousand names read to him in the order in which they had been spoken; and on one occasion, two hundred unconnected verses having been pronounced in his hearing, he at once repeated the whole of them in a reversed order. Sir William Hamilton, who states these facts, also mentions the case of a young Corsican, who could, without the slightest hesitation, repeat "thirty-six thousand names in the order in which he had heard them, and then reverse the order, and proceed backward to the first," and this too after the lapse of a whole year. It is said of Pascal, that he "forgot nothing of what he had read or heard or seen." There are persons who can recite every word of a lengthy discourse upon simply hearing it once. Some men have been characterized as walking-libraries, on account of the fullness and copiousness of their memories, having not only great power of retention, but also great facility in commanding and bringing forward, at a moment's warning, the extended and various treasures of their own minds. Such remarkable memories excite our surprise; yet it is well to bear in mind, that they are not miraculous, but simply natural in the sense of working according to those established laws that preside over the most common forms of memory. They show, in a very extraordinary manner, what may be done under the operation of these laws, more than suggesting the idea of a reserved and unexpended power of memory that is not ordinarily called into action.

There are also many striking and peculiar cases of resuscitated knowledge, in which apparently extinct memories are suddenly restored, that lead to the same conclusion. A very remarkable example of this character is detailed by Dr. Abercrombie. He describes the case of a lady who, in the last stage of a chronic disease, was carried from London to a lodging in the country. There her infant daughter was taken to visit her, and after a short interview carried back to town. The lady died a few

days after; and the daughter grew up without any recollection of her mother, till she was of mature age. At this time she happened to go into the very room in which her mother died, without knowing it to have been so. She started back, on entering the room; and when a friend who was with her asked the cause of her agitation, she replied: "I have a distinct impression of having been in this room before, and that a lady who lay in that corner, seemed very ill, leaned over me, and wept." This is certainly a very wonderful example of memory. Some secret spring in the soul of that woman was touched as she entered that room; and in the twinkling of an eye, her mind went back to a scene of her infancy — a scene of mere impressions at the time, which had been latent up to the period of this occurrence, but which being recalled and brought into the field of her consciousness, in the maturity of her intelligence, at once expounded themselves. Her memory did this work. What then may not such a power do?

The numerous instances of quickened memory under the influence of physical causes, show what the mind may do under special and extraordinary exaltations of its activity. Persons on the brink of death by drowning are said to have unusually vivid visions of the past. A gentleman stated his own experience to me, at such a moment, in the following words: "My whole existence rushed before me in an instant; and it seemed to me that I saw every thing that I ever did. I seemed to see all the past in one view." Dr. Rush, who was a very critical observer of human nature, says: "Sometimes we observe in mad people an unexpected resuscitation of knowledge; hence we hear them describe events, and speak in ancient or modern languages, or repeat long and interesting passages from books, none of which, we are sure, they were capable of recollecting in the natural and healthy state of their mind." He states the case of several Swedes and Germans, who, when dying, prayed in their native languages, though they had not used them for sixty years; indeed had forgotten them from early childhood. The Rev. Mr. Flint, an American clergyman, in his *Recollections of the Valley of the Mississippi*, tells us, that, being prostrated with a fever, and partially delirious, his memory was more than ordinarily exact and retentive, that he was able to repeat whole passages in the different languages which he had studied, with entire accuracy, and that he recited, without losing or misplacing a word, a passage of poetry which he could not so repeat after being recovered to health. His power of recollection received a wonderful impulse from his physical condition. Sir William Hamilton describes the case of a French lady, the Comtesse de Laval, who, being ill, spake, when asleep, in a language not a syllable of which did she understand when awake. The language was that of the

nurse who had the care of this lady when she was an infant; and the words were such as would be used in teaching an infant child to talk. All these words were wholly lost to her in health, and when awake; and yet they were not absolutely lost, as proved by the fact that being an invalid, she recalled them in the hours of sleep. Precisely how her mental nature was thus moved, we can not tell; yet the case is a very impressive example of resuscitated knowledge. The words which she had heard when a little child, and which she had entirely forgotten in adult life, flashed across the heavens of her spirit under the circumstances we have named, showing that though ideas may be long buried in the soul, they may nevertheless be recalled, being latent but not lost. A very striking case of the same character, given upon the authority of Coleridge, is that of a German servant-girl, who could neither read nor write, but who, during an attack of nervous fever, was incessantly talking Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, in each of these languages making coherent and intelligible sentences. When a child, this girl had lived in the family of a learned man, who was in the habit of walking up and down a passage in his house into which the kitchen-door opened, and reading with a loud voice in these several languages. Upon examining his favorite books, the very sentences uttered amid the delirious ravings of this humble domestic, were found to be contained therein; and this at once explained the marvel. The servant-girl had heard these sentences as a mere succession of sounds, attaching to them no meaning; and though in the ordinary condition of her mind they were wholly lost to her, yet when disease supervened and she became a maniac, some cord of her spirit was touched, and in an instant the long-forgotten sounds which she never understood were rolling from her lips. These sounds were in her memory sleeping but not dead, only waiting for an occasion to manifest their presence. Such a case conclusively shows that impressions once made upon the mind, may exist for an indefinite length of time in a latent state, and then be awakened and called forth into the field of our consciousness. Hence, as Coleridge forcibly says, it "contributes to make it even probable that all thoughts are in themselves imperishable; and that if the intelligent faculty should be rendered more comprehensive, it would require only a different and apportioned organization—the body celestial instead of the body terrestrial—to bring before every human soul the collective experience of its whole past existence. And this, *this*, perchance, is the dread book of judgment, in the mysterious hieroglyphics of which every idle word is recorded! Yea, in the very nature of a living spirit, it may be more possible that heaven and earth should pass away, than that a single act, a single thought, should be loosened or lost from the living chain of causes, with

all the links of which, conscious or unconscious, the free will, our absolute self, is coëxtensive and co-present."

Memory contemplated in the light of this reasoning and these cases, seems to be a vast empire in its contents, in its celerity to move with the vigor and speed of a seraph, in its survey of the past, to approximate almost to our idea of omniscience. It is truly a wonderful power; and if such be memory here, in this nascent state of our being, this mere infancy of our intellectual life, what may it not be and what may it not do, when, with our other faculties freed from a body of flesh and blood, it shall soar in progressive expansion and enlargement through the ages of a coming eternity? We can not well avoid the inference, that this faculty will rise to a scope, a compass, a certainty, precision and fullness of action, that will throw the most vivid light of thought back upon our anterior being. Retaining memory as an indestructible attribute of our spiritual nature—living, and lasting, and acting when earth-worms shall have eaten up our mortal bodies—this memory, too, careering in the broad and spacious kingdom of its own laws, and excited by the intense stimulations of immortality—we surely shall not in these premises forget the world whence we came, or fail to recognize ourselves as the identical beings who, in that world, passed through the varying scenes of an earthly life. Our memories will and must forever keep up the connection of thought with our history in time. We shall forever see it. Though past, it will be held in present view. No remoteness of time and no multitude of particulars will impair or perplex the exercise. We shall doubtless more perfectly recollect the life that now is, looking at it from eternity, than we can now recollect it, looking at it from time. Things that here have faded into absolute oblivion, may be seen and pondered there, painted upon the canvas of thought with the clearness of a solar beam, returning to be consciously realized in that life where

"Each fainter trace that memory holds
So darkly of departed years,
In one broad glance the soul beholds,
And all that was, at once appears."

The Bible regards the present and the future as merely two stages in the history of one and the same being, linking them together in the relation of time, and in that of moral dependence, implying too the continuance of the same mental faculties; and analogy coinciding with this Bible view, and studying memory in the light of those impressive facts which are earthly, passes onward and upward to those greater facts which are future and eternal. Beginning thus with the data of experience, reason flies to the land of spirits, and there beholds the immortal Memorist in the full vigor and vastness of his endless career. "Remember,"

says the Word of God. "Remember," echoes the responding voice of reason. Remember we shall, and remember we must, never forgetting the scenes of our earthly lifetime, or losing sight of its moral aspect; carrying along with us, from the day of our death to the remotest age of the eternal future, a clear and legible record of our own being. The thought is one of great sublimity. It enters essentially into the glory of our future life. We have no occasion to regret its truth, and surely we ought not so to live as to be afraid of such a truth.

IV. What, then, as a final inquiry, is to be impression of memory upon our HAPPINESS or MISERY in the future world? That so great a power will make an impression upon the soul, pleasant or painful, according to the character of the facts embraced in the exercise, is an inference derivable not only from the greatness of the power, but equally from the ample materials of our present experience. Let us ponder a moment upon this experience, especially in those aspects which involve the question of moral character.

Those who in their conduct towards God and man have been governed by the principle of virtue, ordinarily enjoy the rich blessing of very pleasant memories. Having lived well for themselves and the world, having acted virtuously in the successive stages and various relations of life, whenever they review the scene, they see much upon which it is agreeable to reflect. They have not wasted their powers in idleness, or perverted them by unlawful uses. To their families they have been of great service. What they could do, they have cheerfully done to relieve the sorrows of others, and promote the general interests of human society; and especially have they sought to discharge their duties to God, adoring him, loving him, trusting him, and accepting the salvation which his grace has provided for a guilty world. Lives thus enriched by virtue, thus expressed in the activities of benevolence, and thus marked by piety towards God, lay a broad foundation for happy reminiscence. As one enters the vale of years, and approaches that period when his powers of action fail, when his interest in the outward excitements of earth becomes feeble, and when too his accumulating infirmities loudly suggest that his days are drawing to a close, it is, it must be a great luxury then in thought to revert to the scenes and circumstances of a well-spent life. So Paul felt when the hour of his departure was at hand. What a cheerful radiance gathered from such a life, falls upon the past! What secret memories linger about the sepulcher of departed years! What inspiring hopes dissipate the shadows that overhang the future! Memory has a blessing for the truly good man. Adversity may come; disease may come; pain may make its home in his mortal body; death may mark him for a victim; yet his life, bearing the broad stamp

of virtue, and furnishing the condition of hope through Jesus Christ, is inseparable from himself, incapable of being lost, and hence a legacy of pleasant reflection when every earthly good is fading away. The toils, and trials, and difficulties to be encountered in living well, the temptations and the self-denials practiced, the total battle of virtue in her heroic struggle to be or to do, her sympathies with the suffering, her charity to the needy, her warning to the wicked, her faith in Jesus, her zeal for his cause, her oft-repeated prayer to the God of grace—all these varying phases of earthly goodness, whenever revisited in thought, invoke the smile of conscience, and by the appointment of God, connect themselves with a sequel of virtuous peace.

Just the opposite experience, even on earth, will sooner or later flow from a life distinguished by opposite qualities. Fix your eye upon that man who has pursued the way of sin, scorning every principle of piety, and laughing at all the sanctions of immortality—he has never drawn a single breath of genuine prayer, or done a single thing to please the God of his being. Pure, simple, unmodified, and appalling sinfulness has been, and still is, the only character which he has lived to acquire; thus he has spent his days on earth; and now, perhaps, in the closing hours of life, comes a period of meditation and review. His own memory has taken him in hand. That memory drags up the sheeted ghosts of long-buried sins. He looks at them, recognizes them, and pronounces them his own. His whole nature is pressed with portentous rumors from the past; the testimony of his memory he can not question; the voice of conscience he can not decline to hear; and do you wonder that such a man, conversing with such a past, is filled, as he now seems to be, with the piercing agony of self-reproach? There is, perhaps, no scene more dreadful than that furnished by the spirit of a man, when fully aroused under the self-inflicted visitation of retrospective and condemnatory thought. In such a crisis happiness is at an end, and misery becomes the dominant and all-pervading experience of the soul.

"Sometimes the universal air
Seems lit with ghastly flame;
Ten thousand, thousand dreadful eyes
Are looking down in blame."

Facts, to almost any extent, some of them of the most startling character, are ready to testify to the truth of this picture. The disquietude, bitterness, and despair felt by every sinner in the hour of his conviction, his dissatisfaction with himself, his fears for the future, his universal wretchedness of feeling, grow out of the elements of his own life, as rehearsed to him by the faithful voice of memory. A gentleman who had filled a high position in society, having for several years been a member of the

American Congress, in a sickness which he supposed to be his last, said to a friend: "Now that I see myself as I really am, and as I have been, my whole life looks to me like one long, dark, black line. I am to myself the most afflicting object of which I can think." Memory spake; and the bitter wail of woe was the echo that came up from the spirit of the statesman and the sinner. What was it that so terribly haunted that man of prostituted genius, the unhappy Voltaire, during the last hours of his life? What unnerved the spirit and prostrated the courage of this distinguished hero of infidelity? What caused him to exclaim, "I am abandoned by God and man?" What led him to solicit an interview with a Catholic priest, and actually draw up with his own hand a written recantation of the principles he had professed? The simple truth is, Voltaire, on his death-bed, seeing Voltaire in the career of his past life, was as much displeased as he was distressed with the sight. He could not, without dismay, endure the spectacle of his own existence. What, again, was it that created such intense anguish in the soul of Francis Newport, when the hour of his departure was at hand? An infidel in sentiment, and a profligate in morals, he at length reached the point where the return of thought to the life he had lived crushed his spirit with the greatness of its own agony. Looking towards the fire, the wretched man exclaimed: "Oh! that I was to lie and broil upon that fire for a hundred thousand years, to purchase the favor of God, and be reconciled to him again! But it is a fruitless, vain wish; millions of years will bring me no nearer to the end of my tortures than one poor hour. O eternity! eternity! Who can properly paraphrase upon the words, forever and ever?" Memory, true to her trust, sure in her action, and clear in her statement, looked into the past, and there gathered these elements of horror, and placed them in the bosom of this unhappy man. It was memory that kindled such a flame of self-inflicted wrath in the soul of the wretched Altamont, compelling him to exclaim: "O time! time! it is fit thou shouldst thus strike thy murderer to the heart. How art thou fled forever! A month!—oh! for a single week! I ask not for years, though an age were too little for the much I have to do." Hear him at a later moment of the dreadful struggle: "Remorse for the past throws my thoughts on the future; worse dread of the future strikes them back on the past. I turn, and turn, and find no ray. Didst thou feel half the mountain that is on me, thou wouldst struggle with the martyr for his stake, and bless heaven for the flames." These words need no comment. "The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity; but a wounded spirit who can bear?" The lines of Lord Byron, the poet and the sinner, penning and publishing the retrospective griefs of his own spirit, seem pertinent to this entire class of cases:

"My days are in the yellow leaf;
 The flowers, the fruits of love are gone;
 The worm, the canker, and the grief
 Are mine alone.
 The fire that on my bosom preys
 Is lone as some volcanic isle;
 No torch is lighted at its blaze—
 A funeral pile."

Here then we take our stand, not upon a doubtful speculation, but a positive and well-attested fact of experience, that memory does sustain a most vital and intimate connection with the question of happiness or misery, acting in the one direction or the other according to the character of the report which it brings up from the past. Hence we speak of pleasant memories and painful memories, designating facts with which every one is acquainted. What then is the general conclusion of at least a very suggestive analogy in respect to the impression to be made by this same faculty after death? Unless all the laws that govern reasoning here, are to be reversed hereafter, it can not be true that persons who, in the moral elements of life, stand at opposite poles, and who in this condition pass into the world of spirits, will and must, by the force of causes inherent in their own being, be as widely divergent when they awake in eternity. It would seem impossible, without a total change in their mental natures, to identify them in one destiny, or unite them in one common class of experiences. In moral estimation they are radically opposed to each other; they present an essential difference in the manner of their respective lives; and hence, judging of the impression of memory in eternity by what experience teaches here in like circumstances, we come to the conclusion fairly, naturally, almost necessarily, that happiness will be the result in the one case, and misery the result in the other. Where the facts to be remembered are so widely unlike, the effect of the review must be correspondingly different.

In respect then to the dead who die in the Lord, the Bible assures us that they are blessed, not only in the fact that they rest from their labors, but also in the further fact that their works do follow them. These works, being alike the evidence and the elements of their spiritual character on earth, pass with them into eternity as the realities of their moral state; and in view of them, judging the good by them according to the rule of grace in Christ Jesus, God deems it fitting to give them the rich rewards of heaven. Is it then unreasonable to suppose, that the memory of these sainted ones whom God approves, will gather from the scenes of time at least some of the themes of celestial joy? In time they were prepared for heaven; in time they fought the battle of piety, and by the grace of God laid the foundation for eternal glory; in time they were greeted with the plan of re-

demption, and in time this plan came home to their spirits as the power of God unto salvation; in time they were led by a kind and merciful providence, their wants supplied, their faith disciplined, and their hopes confirmed; and, hence, as Christians, they could hardly understand themselves in the skies without recurrence to these antecedents of preparation for and progress towards their heavenly home. There is such an intimate connection between the facts earthly and the facts heavenly, that the thought of the latter can never be complete without the thought of the former. As we now look forward with joy and hope to what is to be, so we shall hereafter look backward with joy and gratitude to what has been, recounting to ourselves, perhaps publishing to others, the record of goodness and grace, piety and love, which began in the morning of our existence only to culminate in an eternal noon. Seeing this life as it was, thinking of it in that to which it has led, and beholding it in the clearer light of celestial knowledge, the good will carry it with them down the path of eternal ages, as the first chapter of that wonderful history which their memories will be forever writing, though never able to finish.

From this pleasant and hopeful view, so gratifying to thought and inspiring to the Christian pilgrim, we turn with a feeling of sadness to its melancholy contrast. What shall we say of memory in the experience of those whom God's decree for life's misdeeds has consigned to penal woe? In whatever this woe may consist, whether in the natural effects of sin, or in special inflictions, or in both combined, it is, in relation to the consciousness of the subject and the sufferer, an experience, something which he feels, and the reasons of which he can not but know. Memory forever keeping up the connection of thought between what he is and what he was, always impressing him with the living sense of identity in both worlds, will not fail to tell him why he is a fugitive from the realms of peace. And if the same laws of impression, the same responsiveness of feeling to the power of facts that exist here, shall continue to exist hereafter, then the memories of a lost soul must form a most doleful catalogue of visions had and experiences felt. I shall not attempt to draw the picture; I have no desire to speak in terms of extravagance or severity; yet I can not but think that it will be a dreadful thing to remember in hell. What is there in a life that breaks the law of duty, incurs the frown of Heaven, and ruins the soul, of which one can ever think with pleasure? Regret in its most pungent form, a consciousness of self-ruin without mitigation or excuse, a vision of divine authority resisted and mercies perverted, a clear and penetrating sense of self-condemnation, a distinct and self-pronouncing apprehension of the justice of God—these elements of mental experience, associating themselves with the exercise of memory, and deriving their chief

energy from the facts to which that memory testifies, may perchance enter into that dreadful compound of woe of which the Bible speaks in a manner well calculated to arouse the sensibilities of a sinning and sleeping world.

Those, moreover, who were born and educated in a Christian land, a land of Sabbaths and of Bibles, where the light of truth, as compared with the rest of the world, shines with unusual brightness, if proving recreant and undutiful under the high privilege thus afforded, must lay up for themselves a most awful treasure of bitter recollections hereafter. It is a clear doctrine, of both reason and revelation, that the more light one has, making a bad use thereof, the more guilt he incurs, and proportionately the darker his prospects for the world to come. Is it then true that the Bible contains a revelation from God? True, that Jesus Christ, the divine Saviour of men, put on the robes of our humanity, and after a public ministry full of light and love, laid down his life as an atonement for the sins of a lost race? True, that the Gospel which he preached and sealed with his own blood, is "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth?" True, that the God of this Gospel requires our acceptance of the same, enforcing it by the solemn sanctions of eternity? True, that this Gospel is urged upon us by motives greater than which it is not possible to conceive? Are these things true? And is it further true that we are the persons who know and believe these things, who have known and acknowledged them from the days of our earliest childhood? And, still further, is it true that we are setting at naught, and practically treating as fabulous, these gracious and glorious counsels of the great God in our behalf? Do we thus live under the Gospel? Are these the premises of life given, and these the facts of life conducted? Then, alas! alas! for our prospects in the world to come! It were better for us to have lived and died in the deepest darkness of paganism. I can think of no other class of beings upon whom memory will visit so stern a retribution, or in whose future experience the sense of self-ruin and guilt will burn with such resistless fury. It will be an awful thing in eternity to think of such conduct in such circumstances as a true and faithful transcript of time. The soul, pierced by the terrible vision, must pour forth the bitterest wail of anguish that ever fell on the ear of intelligence. In the following lines, containing, perchance, quite as much truth as poetry, we perhaps have the earthly costume of an immortal experience:

"Yonder sits my slighted Saviour,
With the marks of dying love;
Oh! that I had sought his favor,
When I felt his spirit move!
Golden moments—
When I felt his spirit move!"

I have thus discoursed to you upon memory considered as a retributive power, defining the faculty, explaining the laws of its action, unfolding the extent of its retentive grasp upon the past, and finally contemplating its impression in relation to the question of happiness or misery. In these several aspects, I have endeavored to show, on the ground of a reasonable analogy, what we are to expect in the life to come, employing the data of the present as a lamp to guide our thoughts into the future, and in every step of the progress reaching the very conclusion that coincides with the Bible doctrine of our endless being. How much weight there is in these views, is a question upon which the hearer will judge for himself. To me it seems clear that they are sufficiently probable, and if probable, sufficiently significant, to address to all men a very solemn appeal in favor of Christian virtue, and an equally solemn one against sin. Combined with the explicit teaching of the Scriptures, they give to thought its law, to action its rule, to purpose its end, to virtue its hope, to sin its fear, and to immortality its condition. They present man to our view as a being capable of a great good, and equally capable of a great disaster. He has within himself the elements of the stupendous possibility, and he may by action create the elements of the certainty. My prayer to God is, that we may so act in this life, that when we review it in the next, memory will be our blessing and not the minister of endless woe.

SERMON III.

THE DUTY OF PRAISING GOD.

"Oh! that men would praise the Lord for his goodness and for his wonderful works to the children of men!"—PSALM 107 : 8.

THE works, in which the goodness of God is expressed in the present state, and for which we are called to praise him, are the works of creation and redemption.

This world is a stupendous example of the creative power and wisdom and goodness of God. "The heavens declare his glory and the earth is full of his riches."

His great power and goodness appear in the light of the sun and moon and stars : in the various orders of creatures which he has brought into existence, and in the provision he has made for their wants ; especially in the existence of man, whom he made in his image, capable of obeying his laws, of enjoying his favor, and of seeing his perfection displayed in his works.

The goodness of the Lord appears in creation, not only in providing what is necessary for man and all creatures, but in rendering what is necessary agreeable, so that they are induced to partake of it as a gratification, as well as for support. The light of the sun is not only useful and necessary, but pleasant. The fruits of the earth are not only means of subsistence, but agreeable to the taste. There is a pleasing as well as useful variety in the changes of the year. "Every thing is beautiful in its season." A field covered with snow in winter, considered in its associations and appearance, is as truly beautiful as a field covered with verdure in summer. Trees filled with blossoms are, on the same principle, as beautiful in spring as trees loaded with fruit in autumn. When we look abroad upon the scenes of creation, and in addition to the utility of every thing, consider how much there is to gratify the sight, the hearing, the smell, the taste, we must acknowledge that God is good. Like those pieces of coin which are valuable not only for their intrinsic worth, but for their workmanship, all things are inscribed with the skill, the goodness, the image of the Creator.

His goodness is exemplified in social blessings. These are adapted to our joy in prosperity, and to our support and solace in adversity; to our interest, our improvement, and our happiness in all respects. His goodness is expressed in schools and literary institutions, which are so necessary to expand, and enlighten, and enrich the mind. It is expressed in the blessings of liberty, and in the influence of government by which our lives, our property, and our rights in general are protected.

But the Gospel is the most glorious dispensation of his goodness. This breaks the fetters of sin. This looses the bands of death, brings us into the glorious liberty of sons of God, and renders us heirs of a glorious and blessed immortality.

In this world the Son of God has appeared—appeared in our nature. Here he has made an atonement for sin, and overcome the powers of darkness. Here he arose from the dead, and for our salvation ascended to the right hand of all majesty and power.

Here that blessed Spirit who garnished the heavens, and who is the author of all life and light, is pleased to exert his gracious influence in restraining and sanctifying men, in guiding and supporting them in the path of duty, and preparing them to receive a crown of glory which fadeth not away. Here God has given the Scriptures, and appointed Sabbaths and the ministry of the Lord, and all the means of grace; and even the afflictive dispensations of his providence are overruled for good.

The Lord expresses his goodness in particular gifts. With these some of mankind are more highly favored than others. The inhabitants of this country enjoy not only those blessings

which are common to mankind in general, as food and raiment, but some blessings which are in a sense peculiar to them. They have more liberty than any other nation, and their form of government is more suited to a free people.

They have the most religious liberty. Their consciences are under no restraint as to articles of faith or modes of worship; and if they avoid being bewildered, or led astray by the multiplicity of doctrines that are preached, or the variety of forms they have opportunities to adopt, and study the Scriptures, and make them their guide, they may be purer in doctrine, and simpler in worship, and more eminent in piety, than any other portion of the Christian Church.

To praise him implies a sense of his original and infinite goodness.

He has expressed his goodness in creation, by bringing all things into existence out of nothing; and he expresses his grace, by forming creatures for the services and enjoyments of his kingdom who were worse than nothing. It is his design, in all his works and dispensations, to bring creatures to a knowledge of his character, and furnish inducements for them to love and adore him: and a view of his perfection, as infinitely superior to things created, is necessary that he may be the object of our praise.

The duty farther implies gratitude for his benefits. He is the author of all good. He has created innumerable subjects of enjoyment, and faculties to enjoy those which are not created, so that we may partake of universal good. We should be grateful for the benefits conferred on others, as well as on ourselves. If we do not rejoice in the provision made for their happiness, we shall be opposed to the goodness of God, and shall be incapable of the true enjoyment of it in any respect. Yet we should be peculiarly sensible of benefits conferred on us; for in not acknowledging the goodness of God in what we feel and possess, we should indulge ingratitude against the dictates of nature. We should be grateful for the consolation he has provided for us under the experience of evil; that he renders it subservient to good; that he "brings light from darkness, and order from confusion;" that in this state of trial and change, he is preparing the way for the fullest manifestation of his glory and the highest perfection and happiness of his believing and obedient creatures.

To praise God implies a disposition to conform to him, to walk in his commands, to seek his glory, and the temporal and everlasting welfare of our fellow-men. "Doing justly, loving mercy, and walking humbly with God;" for how can we be pleased with that goodness which we do not wish to resemble, and the laws of which we are not inclined to obey?

To praise God implies that we trust in him for future support and happiness; for his goodness is infinite and inexhaustible.

Our views of it would therefore be essentially defective, and very dishonourary to him, if what we have already received should discourage us from expecting what may be necessary in future.

"Godliness has the promise of the life which now is, and of that which is to come." There is a connection between the present and the future state; each is equally under the divine government, in relation to the same ultimate object. "God will therefore withhold no good thing from those that walk uprightly." He has promised that he will provide for them, and support them in all their trials and changes. He has promised that the Church shall be continued, and rise superior to all opposition, so that the earth shall be full of the knowledge and glory of the Lord."

Though the world and all material systems are "reserved unto fire against the judgment of the great day," yet the dead shall be raised, and after the judgment, to the righteous scenes will be opened extensive, varied, and glorious beyond expression or thought.

But God, is the only object of praise, and the only ground of rejoicing. It should be the language of all intelligent creatures, "Whom have we in heaven but thee, and there is none on earth we desire beside thee. Things created are a shadow. Thou art the only original, substantial, all-sufficient good."

REV. CORTLANDT VAN RENSSELAER, D.D.

IN connection with the accurate portrait likeness of a good man which stands at the head of this number of the NATIONAL PREACHER, we record a brief biographical sketch. We desire to honor his memory as a man, as a faithful minister of the Gospel, as an active Christian, as an indefatigable laborer in the cause of his Divine Master in every good word and work, and as a friend and classmate in college.

He was the son of the Hon. Stephen Van Rensselaer and Cornelia Paterson. These are historical names; the one in New-York, the other in New-Jersey. He was born in the city of Albany, May 25th, 1808. He graduated at Yale College in 1827. He was admitted to the bar in his native State in 1830. The same year, having decided to devote his life to the work of the ministry, he entered the Theological Seminary at Princeton, New-Jersey. He was ordained to the sacred office in 1835, and commenced his ministry in preaching to the colored population in Virginia. Circumstances beyond his own control constrained him to leave that chosen field of labor, and in 1837 he was installed the pastor of the First Presbyterian Church, Burlington, New-Jersey. In 1837 he was chosen Corresponding Secretary and principal executive officer of the Board of Education, under the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, in which service he continued to the end of his laborious life. This is a brief record of the more important dates in his professional history.

Cortlandt Van Rensselaer was a good son and brother; a good husband and father; a good citizen, neighbor, and friend; a good minister and a good Christian. During his lingering illness, which terminated in death at Burlington, July 27th, the General Assembly in session at Rochester, embracing more than three hundred members, gathered from every State of the Union, (excepting three,) addressed a letter to Dr. Van Rensselaer, then upon his dying bed, expressing their sorrows for his affliction, and their high estimate of his worth and services. That letter was heard in the midst of tears and sighs. It was adopted by the whole Assembly rising to their feet, when the oldest minister present gave utterance in prayer to the feelings which swelled every heart. This is an incident unprecedented in our history. No other man was ever so honored. It was a tribute not to greatness, but to goodness.

The following is a copy of the letter sent to the Rev. Dr. Van Rensselaer by the General Assembly:

"TO THE REV. CORTLANDT VAN RENSSELAER, D.D.

"BELOVED BROTHER IN CHRIST JESUS: The General Assembly has learned with deep solicitude of the afflictive dispensation which detains you from its present sessions. It has pleased Him whose 'way is in the sea, and his path in the great waters,' to visit you with a painful illness. We can not permit you to suppose that the Church which you have loved and served so well, is unmindful of you in this season of trial. And we should do injustice to ourselves not to assure you of our united and cordial sympathy.

"We are all well aware that one who feels himself drawing near to eternity, and around whose couch of suffering the light of that 'better country' is shedding its heavenly radiance, can stand in no need of earthly consolations. Nor would we offend your Christian humility by enlarging upon the services you have rendered to the cause of Christ. But we may—nay, we must—magnify the grace of God in you, which has wrought so effectually to the furtherance of the Gospel amongst us through your instrumentality. We can not accept your resignation of the important office you have just relinquished, without bearing our formal and grateful testimony to the manner in which its duties have been performed. With devout thankfulness to God, and under him, beloved brother, to you, we record our sense of the eminent wisdom, fidelity, and efficiency, and the noble, disinterested liberality with which you have for fourteen years conducted the affairs of our 'Board of Education.' Under your administration it has risen from a condition of comparative feebleness, to strength and power. Its plans have been matured and systematized. Its sphere has been greatly enlarged. It has assumed new and most beneficent functions. Your luminous pen has vindicated the principles which lie at the basis of true Christian education. And by your numerous publications, your sermons and addresses, your extended correspondence, and your self-denying activity in visiting every part of the Church, you have, by God's blessing, accomplished a great work in elevating this sacred cause to its just position, and gathering around it the sympathies of our whole communion. Nor may we forbear to add, that in prosecuting these manifold official labors, you have greatly endeared yourself personally to the ministry and membership of the Church.

"Rejoicing as we do in the auspicious results of these unwearied exertions, we mourn this day the sacrifice they have cost us. While the Church is reaping the harvest—a harvest which we fully believe she will go on gathering until the Master comes to present her unto himself, a glorious Church—the workman who has done so much to prepare the ground and sow the seed, falls exhausted in the furrows. There, dear brother, we doubt not you would choose to fall—upon that field to the culture of which you had dedicated your life.

"On behalf of the Church we represent, we once more thank you sincerely and gratefully for all your labors and sacrifices. We lift up our hearts in humble and fervent supplication to our common God and Father, that his presence may be with you in this hour of trial. We hear with joy, that he does not forget you; that he is giving you strength according to your day; and that your peace flows like a river. We plead with him that if it be possible, this blow may still be averted, and your health be restored. But we desire to commit you into his hands. That Saviour in whom you trust will not forsake you. The Divine Comforter will comfort you and yours. Your covenant God will be the God of your children.

"To him, the Triune Jehovah, we affectionately commend you—praying that his rod and his staff may comfort you, and that whenever the summons shall come, an entrance may be ministered unto you abundantly, into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

"On behalf of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, in session at Rochester, N. Y., May 23, 1860.

"JOHN W. YEOMANS, Moderator.

"WILLIS LORD, Stated Clerk.

"ALEX. T. MCGILL, Permanent Clerk.

"A. G. VERMILYE, Temporary Clerk.

"[Signed also by the whole Assembly.]"